

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS.

Our Salvation Depends On It.

The recent meeting of the Synod of New York was held at Johnstown, N. Y., October 19. Two days earlier, (October 17) the pastor of that Church, Rev. Charles McKenzie, preached a sermon on the Virgin Birth of Jesus. The "Johnstown Republican" gives extracts from the sermon. In it he declares that personally he accepts the Scripture narrative of Christ's birth, but he goes on thus: "I should not insist upon anybody else accepting it. There are many difficulties connected with the report given in the Gospel that, I realize, make it very difficult for some minds to really know what to do about them. It does not matter any how. Nothing important depends upon it. There are no fundamental ideas of Christian truth affected in the least in accepting or rejecting it."

Can this be true? Does it not matter! God sent an angel to assure Mary, and God sent an angel to assure Joseph, that her child Jesus, was begotten by God himself. When God took this trouble to verify the fact, are we at liberty to say that it does not matter?

But it does matter, and vitally.

When we look at the foundations of the work of Christ, we find that our redemption depends on the fact that the fatherhood of Jesus was not of man but of God. The truth is that if Jesus of Nazareth be not of divine parentage, his death would be shorn of its expiatory value, and of its saving power. His work as Redeemer would be undermined.

To understand this matter we must enter into the question of God's plan of salvation. It is salvation through the work of a representative. Its central feature is that Jesus Christ came to earth to act as a representative—a representative for sinful man. We have sinned, and deserve punishment; as our representative Jesus was to bear that punishment. We have all failed to so live as to earn a title to heaven. As our representative, Jesus so lived in holiness of life as to earn a title to eternal life. As our representative under the terms of God's covenant. He bought for us the pardon of our sins and earned for us the privileges of heaven.

We have repeated the words, "as our representative," because on this hinges all the work of Christ. God could have created men without the privilege of having a representative to act for the whole race. He did so create the angels. They have no tie of race; they have no representative head. When one of them endures his probation he secures life for himself alone; if one of them sins, he alone suffers. But for them (who have no racial representative) there is no Redeemer. In Hebrews 2: 16 we read that Christ did "not lay hold on angels." For Satan or His angels, there is no Redeemer.

But in the creation of man on this earth. God in special kindness, arranged for the principle of representation. He appointed the first Adam as representative of the race, so that if he had obeyed in Eden, the whole race would have had all promised blessings. In doing this God prepared the way for the coming of the second Adam, Christ. The efficacy of Christ's work depends on this ingrafting by God of the principle of representation in this world.

If Adam had faithfully kept the season of probation,

the whole race of men would have been safe, dwelling in perfect security to all eternity, because of the obedience of the one man.

But Adam, as representative of the race, committed sin; and thus, the penalty of sin fell upon the race. Every child of Adam by ordinary generation is born under sin, under the penalty of Adam's transgression.

Now, if Jesus of Nazareth had been the child of a human father, He also would have been born under the curse, subject to death because He was a child of sinning Adam. Then all his sufferings would be without meritorious value. His death, instead of being His voluntary act, would have been one of the consequences due to Adam's sin. It would not have been possible for Him to say "I lay down my life" for sinners, because already it was forfeited. Any person who was "in Adam" was involved in the consequences of sin, and could not do any work of redemption.

But Jesus Is The Son of God.

The infinite wisdom of God solved the difficulty.

In order to be the Redeemer of the human race the Christ must (on the one hand) be partaker of flesh and blood. God secures this by causing Him to be born of Mary. He became bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh.

On the other hand, in order to be free from the condemnation of Adam's transgression, the Christ must not be descended from Adam through the fatherhood of and child of Adam. This was secured when God Himself became the father of Jesus, so that the angel could tell Mary that her child would not be a "guilty" child, but would be "that holy thing which shall be born of thee," and that He would be "the Son of God", not of a human father.

In all this, behold the marvelous wisdom of God. It was a problem which human skill could never have solved. Only God could do it. We stand, and lay our hands upon our mouths and admire! !

And now when God has planned thus wonderfully, how does it comport with a child of man to say "It does not matter?"

WHAT ARE WE SPENDING FOR WAR?

In the address of Hon. J. A. Tawney, at the National Peace Congress at Chicago, in May last, he presented the following figures:

During the fiscal year 1908, the expenditures of the United States for the current expenses of the army and navy were \$204,122,855.57. If we exclude from the total revenues of the government the amounts collected from postage, this amount is thirty-six per cent of our revenue.

The amount paid out for pensions, during that year, was \$180,608,204, which is thirty-one per cent of our revenues. The total of war expenses (current and past) was therefore sixty-seven per cent of our revenue.

In the fiscal year 1909, the state of the case is worse. Up to the date of his speech, the payments by the government for current expenses of the army and navy were forty-one per cent of the total, and for pensions, etc., thirty-one per cent, making a total of seventy-two per cent of our nation's money used for the purposes of war.